

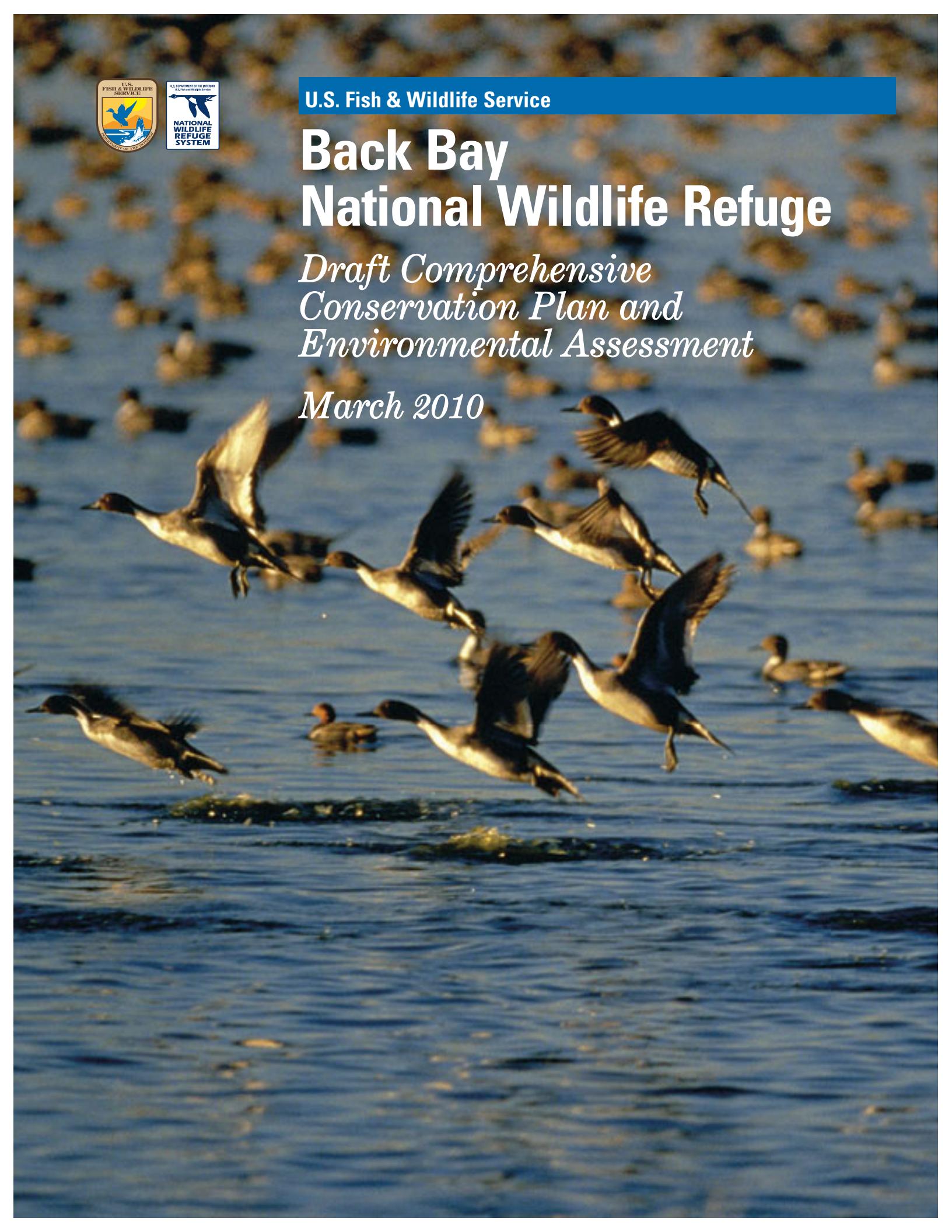


U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge

*Draft Comprehensive  
Conservation Plan and  
Environmental Assessment*

*March 2010*



*Front and back covers:*

*Northern pintails*  
USFWS



*This blue goose, designed by  
J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become  
the symbol of the National Wildlife  
Refuge System.*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 150-million acre National Wildlife Refuge System comprised of more than 550 national wildlife refuges and thousands of waterfowl production areas. It also operates 70 national fish hatcheries and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, administers the Endangered Species Act, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance Program which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state wildlife agencies.

Comprehensive Conservation Plans provide long term guidance for management decisions and set forth goals, objectives, and strategies needed to accomplish refuge purposes and identify the Service's best estimate of future needs. These plans detail program planning levels that are sometimes substantially above current budget allocations and, as such, are primarily for Service strategic planning and program prioritization purposes. The plans do not constitute a commitment for staffing increases, operational and maintenance increases, or funding for future land acquisition.



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

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and Environmental Assessment*

*March 2010*

## **Refuge Vision Statement**

Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge will work closely with partners and communities to provide a biologically healthy natural environment that restores abundant fish, wildlife and plant populations. Special consideration will be given to those species whose survival is in jeopardy.

In keeping with the Refuge mission, we will provide a healthy haven of land and water to support Back Bay's diverse wildlife communities, with an emphasis on migratory waterbird and songbird management. We will strive to promote active stewardship of these natural resources for present and future generations, while also providing opportunities for compatible public uses. In doing this, we hope to ensure a sound coexistence between wildlife and people that will allow people to share our passion and appreciation of Back Bay's many natural resources, while also enhancing the quality of life in Back Bay.



# Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge

## *Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Environmental Assessment*

*March 2010*

### **Summary**

<b>Type of Action:</b>	Administrative—Development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan
<b>Lead Agency:</b>	U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service
<b>Location:</b>	Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge Virginia Beach, VA
<b>Administrative Headquarters:</b>	Back Bay National Wildlife Refuge 4005 Sandpiper Road Virginia Beach, VA. 23456-4325 Telephone: 757-721-2412 Fax: 757-721-6141
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This Draft Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) and Environmental Assessment (EA) analyze three alternatives to managing the Refuge over the next 15 years. This document also contains seven appendices that provide additional information supporting our analysis. Following is a brief overview of each alternative:

**Alternative A:** This alternative is referred to as our “No Action” or “Current Management” alternative, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). A selection of this alternative would maintain the status quo in managing the Refuge for the next 15 years. No major changes would be made to current management practices. This alternative provides a basis for comparing the other two alternatives.

**Alternative B:** Alternative B, the proposed alternative, represents the planning team’s recommended strategies and actions for achieving Refuge purposes, vision and goals and responding to public issues. This alternative focuses on enhancing the conservation of wildlife through habitat management, as well as providing additional visitor opportunities on the Refuge such as an expansion of the deer hunt, new hiking trails, and a new, medium-sized headquarters/visitor contact station (HQ/VCS) at a new location.

**Alternative C:** Alternative C focuses on using management techniques that would encourage forest growth, and implement strategies that would allow previously proposed wilderness areas to meet minimum criteria for designation. In addition, development of a large headquarters/visitor contact station that can provide office space for the Service’s Virginia Field Office is proposed. This alternative also emphasizes the enhancement of visitor opportunities on the Refuge by improving fishing opportunities and establishing more hiking trails.

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